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THE BRITISH MUSEUM
QUARTERLY VOL. XIV. NO. 2

LONDON

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1940

THE BRITISH MUSEUM QUARTERLY

FOUR PARTS ARE PUBLISHED ANNUALLY, each dealing with the principal acquisitions of the previous quarter. The descriptions are intended to be not too technical for the layman, and to give the expert part at least of what he needs to know. Notice is also given of the temporary exhibitions periodically installed in the galleries, the results of excavations, and additions to the publications of the Museum.

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VII. EGYPTIAN WOODEN STATUETTE IN THE
ALNWICK COLLECTION

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6. THE ALNWICK COLLECTION OF EGYPTIAN ANTIQUITIES.

FROM 1816 onwards Algernon, Baron Prudhoe, passed some years in Egypt visiting the principal sites and monuments; he was a student of the ancient language, then being deciphered, and of the history of the country, and acquired a very considerable collection. From 1835 onwards he added to this collection by purchases made at the sales of the Salt, Burton, and other famous collections, and on his succession as 4th Duke of Northumberland in 1847 the collection was installed at Alnwick Castle. Many of the monuments were published at various times in the works of Sir J. Gardner Wilkinson and of Lepsius, but a catalogue of the whole collection as it then existed was first published in 1880, done by Samuel Birch, then Keeper of the Egyptian, Assyrian, and Oriental Antiquities in the British Museum and President of the Society of Biblical Archaeology; this was printed for private distribution at the expense of the 6th Duke. Since the catalogue was compiled, a certain number of additions have been made to the Egyptian collections, all, apparently, before 1910; a small collection of antiquities from Western Asia was also formed, also before 1910. Now the Duke of Northumberland has deposited the collection in the British Museum on loan. By this act invaluable antiquities are made easily accessible, and scholars will be grateful for the opportunity to inspect treasures once well known but now forgotten.

Two examples are here chosen to illustrate unsuspected surprises. It should first be stated that the numbering of Birch's catalogue has been retained in the Museum arrangement, and that the whole collection is to be known as 'North.', so that any number up to 2048 is described in the Catalogue; numbers above that are more recent additions.

Birch described North. 752 as follows:

'Elegant vase for holding stibium or other cosmetic, in shape of a naked slave girl, carrying a small vase, walking on a pedestal. Her head is shorn, her eyes are inlaid with black and white pigments,

and she wears a gilded girdle round the waist. At the left side of the head is plaited a single lock of hair, coloured black, and a small mushroom-shaped stud of ivory is placed in the ear. At her right side she holds a large jar-shaped vase by both hands. The cover of the vase¹ revolves on a pivot and was fixed by a small cord tied to an ivory stud inserted for that purpose at the side of the vase. Round her neck is a chain or cord with a pendent figure of the god Bes, full face. The lock at the right side is broken off: the hair black. This charming little figure, one of the very finest of the kind, probably represents an Asiatic or other captive offering tribute, and is one of the finest specimens of the art of wood-cutting amongst the ancient Egyptians. $5\frac{1}{4}$ in. high. Fine wood, on a wooden pedestal of darker colour.'

Though Birch's words show that he appreciated the wooden figure of which three views are given on Plates VII and VIII, they scarcely indicate the quite exceptional nature of this object. Apart from a wooden statuette in the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris² there are no other examples of the representation of forward and sideways movement simultaneously among such wooden figures, though forward movement is not infrequent and Professor Capart has pointed out that there are several instances of sideways movement about a central axis. The remarkable treatment will be best understood from the back view, for that shows clearly, what is equally true of the front, that no two points above the buttocks are parallel to and in the same plane as the buttocks, and that the backbone, which is not marked, must be imagined as passing through a double curve. But above this upper body, swung sideways and forwards, the head and neck are poised erect, centrally over the right leg, which is flexed, bearing the weight, as is natural given the downward movement of the right shoulder, while the left leg is pushed forward. The delicate modelling of face and breasts indicates that the slave girl is not more than an immature child,

¹ The cover no longer exists, and probably was not there when Birch wrote.

² J. Capart, *Lectures on Egyptian Art* (University of North Carolina Press, 1928), p. 32, fig. 22. I owe the reference to Mr Edwards. The best illustrations and description are to be found in *Monuments et Mémoires, Fondation Eugène Piot*, xxvi (Paris, 1923), Pl. II, pp. 60 ff. 7, in an article by Capart, *L'Art Égyptien et la Loi de Frontalité*.



a



b

VIII. EGYPTIAN WOODEN STATUETTE



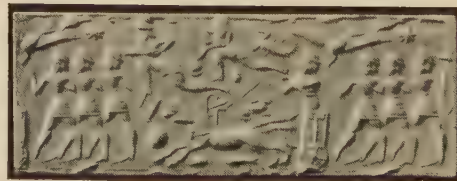
c



d



b



a

IX. *a*, HAEMATITE CYLINDER SEAL. *b*, AGATE SCARABOID SEAL. *c*, TERRACOTTA PLAQUE FROM ARABIA. *d*, HITTITE GOLD STATUETTE

and the slightly splayed stance is well observed; she wears her virgin's girdle, for it is marked by a triangle in black paint reaching up to the golden belt, partly broken away. The left foot is split just above the ankle. There are no obvious parallels for the hair-dressing.

The material from which the figure is carved has been identified as boxwood by Mr. W. W. Howard; it is, in Professor Newberry's opinion, *buxus longifolia*, Boiss.,¹ which grew in the Libanon and in the neighbourhood of Antioch. It is to be noted that the figure in the Bibliothèque Nationale, already referred to, was brought back from Egypt by Cailliaud, and sold to the Cabinet du Roi in either 1819, 1822, or 1824; it seems not improbable that Lord Prudhoe may have obtained the figure here described shortly after 1816, from the same source as Cailliaud obtained the male figure.² Whether that is so or not, both figures are probably of the same date, viz. the Eighteenth Dynasty, to which the male figure is fairly confidently assigned because it resembles Syrian figures in tomb paintings. This figure of the little girl is not, however, likely to belong to the early part of the Dynasty, and it betrays none of the marked peculiarities of the Amarna period. The vase is of a well-known shape, however, found at Amarna, generally painted light blue with decoration in black. Perhaps the reign of Âmenhetep III might be singled out as the most reasonable dating, or alternatively the end of Tut-'ankh-Âmen's reign.

The cylinder seal, North. 2404, must have been acquired after 1880; it is not impossible that it was bought by Lord Percy during his Eastern travels in 1899-1900.³ It is haematite, 2 cm. long, and nearly 1 cm. in diameter, a shape common in the fifteenth century B.C. and later. The cutting is typical of the best work of the time. In the impression, Plate IX *a*, part of the subject has been repeated, because the theme is so arranged that no exact dividing line is possible, such as may occasionally be found on Syrian and Palestinian seals of the thirteenth century and later. The subject is a

¹ I have to thank Professor Newberry for his advice and informative notes on this matter.

² The history of both figures alike is, be it said, fully ascertained and above suspicion.

³ See *Highlands of Asiatic Turkey*, by Earl Percy, M.P. (London, 1901).

parade, probably to the hunt rather than to war. The chariot has a four-spoked wheel commonly found in Cretan representations;¹ the pole, clearly depicted as coming from the axle,² bends sharply upwards and is then lost behind the horses. The body of the chariot is a tall rectangle, thus differing from the lower type found, e.g., in the Hittite sculpture at Malatya and in Egyptian representations. The double loops hanging on the side are not immediately explicable. The driver is apparently naked to the waist, and wears, probably, a long skirt; on his head is the same flat cap as the other men wear, perhaps a tight leather skull-cap turned up round the edge. The reins pass by, rather than under, two crooks with split ends which apparently rise from the horses' collars, perhaps to serve as rein-rings, though not very fitted for the purpose. The horses, in a conventional gallop, prick their ears; the tails are represented like ears of corn. In front, or, alternatively, behind the chariot three men march briskly, arms swinging; they have tight waist-belts and a short kilt, flounced, which much resembles, though it is not identical with, the Cretan wear for athletes.³ Above the horses are two men running, arms swinging more violently than in the march, with the kilt opening for movement. In all these men there is a remarkable convention for the drawing of the foot. Below muscular legs, represented in the best tradition of cylinder seal-cutting from the time of Sargon of Agade onwards, comes a single line making a bold forward sweep, abbreviated only because of the necessity of grouping: the heel is another single line making a right-angled turn, the intervening space is left. In the field are to be seen (1) the full and crescent moon, (2) a pot, (3) a scorpion, (4) a long-necked bird, perhaps a hawk or falcon, diving as though after prey, (5) a hare, (6) a blunt-ended club with central attachment, sometimes wrongly confused with the *urigallu*,⁴ (7) a head in profile,

¹ Evans, *The Palace of Minos*, iv. 807 ff.

² It therefore is not the 'Type B' postulated by Sir Arthur Evans.

³ Evans, *Palace of Minos*, ii. 751 ff. Syrian gods wear such kilts; cf. the figures from Ras Shamra, *Syria*, xviii, Pl. xxiii and elsewhere.

⁴ It has also been called the central arm of a balance; this seems unlikely, since the object is never, apparently, represented as horizontal, but always perpendicular or at a slight angle from the perpendicular.

in the manner of heads found on seal-impressions from Cappadocian tablets, (8) a hand, (9) a fish. That some of these symbols, e.g. nos. 1, 3, 9, are astral is probable, but the meaning of all together escapes us.

The singular importance and unique character of this seal will be at once apparent. The men and the bird are outside the known categories of themes on cylinder seals, yet the seal itself and some elements of the design are normal in Syria about the middle of the second millennium. It is not a sufficient explanation of this seal to say that it shows Cretan influence. It looks as if a Babylonian seal-cutter was actually depicting men in Syria who wore something like Cretan dress,¹ and copied, for this purpose, such figures as the running men from foreign art.

SIDNEY SMITH

7. HEBREW, PALMYRENE, AND HITTITE ANTIQUITIES.

AN interesting scaraboid, B.M. 126388, of banded white, yellow, and red agate has an Egyptian design with a Hebrew inscription (Pl. IX *b*). The design consists of a cartouche containing the symbols of Kheper-Ra, above which is a winged disk and on either side a Uraeus snake crowned with the sun's disk and horns, and a hawk wearing the double crown of Egypt. Above is the inscription '(belonging) to El-dilleh', a name which may be compared with יְהוָה 'Yahu has lifted up', 1 Chr. 24, v.18, Jerem. 36, vv. 12, 25. Length 3 cm.

A circular clay plaque, B.M. 126387, 10.5 cm. high, belongs to a hitherto little-known type (Pl. IX *c*). A mould from which exactly identical plaques could be cast was found at Dura on the Euphrates,² in a house of the third century A.D., while a very similar plaque but with a representation of a female, evidently a goddess, was found at Palmyra.³ Our plaque, employing the current vernacular of Hellenistic art, depicts a god, bearded, mustachioed, and long-haired, wearing the tunic and cloak familiar at Palmyra and a small head-

¹ As Mr. Wainwright has long contended the Egyptians did; see especially *J.H.S.* 1931.

² Rostovtzeff and others, *The Excavations at Dura-Europus, Sixth Season*, pl. xxvi.

³ *Syria*, xiii. 264, fig. 1.

dress crowned with a laurel wreath. It is not possible to determine which god he represents—perhaps he is Zeus. Nor is it clear what purpose such a plaque originally served. It is tempting, however, to connect it with the little image sometimes in the form of a medallion which is worn by Palmyrene priests in the forefront of their head-dresses. Unfortunately, we do not know whether those plaques of the priests were made of clay, like this, in which case it would be probable that this was one, or whether they were made of another material, such as metal. Special importance attaches to this specimen because it was acquired by Mr J. Duncan (who has kindly presented it) in Wadi Baihan, Hadramaut, S. Arabia. It is an eloquent testimony to the ramifications of commerce and intercourse in the third century A.D.

The Department has improved its collection of Hittite objects by the addition of an exquisite miniature statue of gold, 5 cm. high: B.M. 126389 (Pl. IX *d*). It represents a Hittite god, beardless and wearing the pointed hat with rings, a kilt, and pointed shoes, and holding a ritual wand. In the centre of the back is a ring which suggests the object was worn as an amulet; the god represented was probably the weather-god, whatever his local name may have been. A closely similar figure, acquired by Chantre at Yozgad,¹ is now in the Louvre, while a corresponding figure of a goddess, made of electrum, which was formerly in the Nelidoff Collection, then in the Hermitage, and was finally sold in 1931,² was said to have come from Tarsus. The present example resembles in general style the sculptures of Yazili-Kaya, near Boghaz-köi, and therefore belongs to the fourteenth or thirteenth century B.C. R. D. BARNETT

8. FRAGMENTS OF AN EARLY SUMERIAN INSCRIBED BOWL.

THE Department of Egyptian and Assyrian Antiquities has acquired two separate fragments of a large bowl in dark-brown sandstone bearing parts of a Sumerian inscription of U-tug . . . , an early ruler of the city of Kish, who is unknown except for these

¹ Chantre, *Mission en Cappadoce*, pl. XXIV.

² *Illustrated London News*, 10 Oct. 1931.

lines, which allude to his conquest of the territory of Hamazi. These fragments have themselves a history; they were excavated at Nippur between 1893 and 1896 and were published by the late Professor H. V. Hilprecht in his *Old Babylonian Inscriptions* (1896). Since then the inscription has found a place in all collections of early Sumerian texts and in the histories of the period. More recently they came into the possession of the late Lt-Col. L. A. Waddell, whose interest in the inscription, founded upon certain private convictions as to its significance which he set forth in his book entitled *The British Edda*, led him to acquire these fragments.

The great increase of material and knowledge bearing upon the oldest civilization of Babylonia which has accrued in the last two decades has somewhat detracted from the former estimation of this text as one of the earliest extant records of Sumer, but it is still interesting both for the information which it conveys and for the place it has occupied in modern scholarship. The fragments are now numbered 129401 (13.3×7.4 cm.) and 129402 (14.2×13.2 cm.).

C. J. GADD

9. GREEK COINS

GIFTS of 99 coins, mostly Greek, have been received from Mr E. S. G. Robinson. They include a vigorous archaic tetradrachm of Acanthus (Pl. X, no. 1, weight 265.0 grs.) of the end of the sixth century B.C. from a recent find, with the regular device of the lion bringing down a bull; beneath is a rose-bud, the flower of the district. The type is not merely heraldic, for Herodotus records that the countryside round Acanthus was full of wild oxen and lions, and the latter did considerable damage to the camels of Xerxes' baggage-train in its passage from Acanthus to Therme. Two tetradrachms (both from the famous Calianra Hoard) issued during the Peloponnesian War when the Athenians were especially active in Macedonia: the types of both show the local deity, Silenus, now assimilated to Dionysus, on a donkey's back, half lying, half seated, holding a cantharus; in the field is a crow perched on a vinestock, and the same tree appears on the reverse framed by the city's name. Though the two coins are contemporary the difference in style between them is remarkable; that

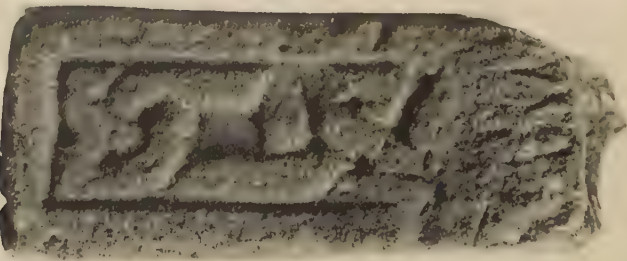
of no. 2 (weight 262.5 grs.) is excellent and suggests Athenian influence in its reflection of the Parthenon sculptures, while no. 3 (weight 263.3 grs.) is crude and dry. Three drachms of Elis, nos. 4-6 (weights 72.7, 74.0, and 74.5 grs.), chosen from the fifty varieties selected from another recent find: the coins are of the end of the third century B.C. and the hoard was probably buried at a time of great political tension shortly before 191 when the Eleans came over to the side of the Romans and the Achaean League. The types, as so commonly at Elis, refer to Zeus; one side bears his eagle striking at a hare, the other an elaborate thunderbolt, of which no. 5 shows an interesting variant with a Medusa-head in the middle of the handle.

Among recent purchases may be mentioned a piece of great importance: a unique silver stater of Dicaea in Macedonia (no. 7, weight 263.3 grs.) of the early fifth century B.C. The types are those of the mother-city Eretria in Euboea, a cow licking its hind-leg with a bird perched on its back, and on the reverse a cuttle-fish; but the richness of significant detail is surprising. The bird appears to be worrying a mouse which it has just caught, perhaps a reference to some bit of local folklore, while beneath the cow a sea-turtle is depicted swimming, no doubt to symbolize the Thermaic gulf on which Dicaea stood. On the reverse for the first time we have the city's name complete, in fine, bold letters. Two very rare gold staters of the Black Sea cities, Olbia and Chersonesus, have also been purchased. The first (no. 8, weight 107.1 grs.) was struck in the first century A.D., during the period when Olbia was under the control of the Scythians. Its obverse bears the portrait and style of the Scythian ruler Pharzoius who is known only from his coins; on the reverse is an eagle with the initials of the town and of two mint officials. The second bears the date of a local era equivalent to A.D. 107. Its types, Apollo and Artemis with bow and spear, are the tutelary deities of Chersonesus. Within the Roman Empire the striking of gold coins was a jealously guarded imperial prerogative, but it is interesting to note how on the outskirts, here as at Bosporus near by, it was tacitly permitted to the local authority.

J. ALLAN



X. GREEK COINS



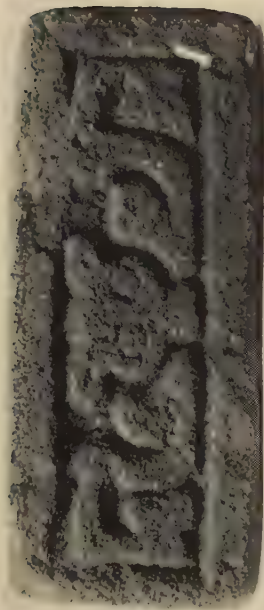
b



a



c



d

XI. SAXON GRAVE-STONE

10. TWO SAXON SCULPTURES FROM CHESHIRE.

THE Saxon sculpture in the British Museum is never likely to be more than a small series of carvings; but it contains several pieces of considerable historical importance and of real merit as works of art, and it is gratifying to record that its scope was appreciably widened in May of last year by a gift from Mrs G. W. Haswell and Mr F. T. Haswell, made in memory of a very devoted student of Saxon art, the late G. W. Haswell. The acquisition consists of two fragments representing on a quite small scale and with satisfactory completeness some North Mercian decorative motives of the tenth or, possibly, early eleventh century. Both fragments are believed to have come from Chester, and are made of the local red sandstone. The first (Pl. XI) seems to be the upper portion of a small standing grave-stone, and it now measures 17 inches in height. The slab, which is $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches thick, is ornamented on the face by an animal design in a rectangular panel (*a*); on the back by a stout, close-textured interlace in a panel with a curved base; on the edges by an open-link interlace with terminal Stafford knots in a panel with a gabled lower end (*b*, *c*); and on the top by a little animal-head biting a foliate scroll (*d*). This last detail is a grotesque little design of much charm, and the small lion-pattern on the face, done very flat with a contoured and hatched body, ribbon-like trunk, and an interlacing tongue, is also a very attractive work. It is curious that there should not be any close analogies in form to this small grave-stone; though we do at least know that slabs of modest size with ornamented tops were used elsewhere in this area, witness the tenth-century Runic monument from Overchurch in the Grosvenor Museum, Chester. The ornamental style, however, with its rather stocky patterns tightly packed into their containing panels, is typical Mercian work, and here it is only necessary to call attention to points such as the probable West Saxon source of the lion-head with the spray in its mouth, and the obvious Celtic or barbaric Anglo-Saxon portrayal of the originally southern lion that ornaments the face. Such a mixture of Romanesque and barbaric elements, and the treatment of Romanesque elements in markedly barbaric manner, are characteristics of North-East Mercian sculpture,

and are observable as early as the period of the ninth-century Sandbach crosses. They represent tendencies further illustrated by the second slab (Pl. XII), which measures $15\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length. This is just the broken corner of a recumbent tombstone, and shows a tiny portion of what seems to be a ninth-century West Midland type of animal-pattern in a rectangular panel with, on one edge, a border of foliate scroll, very much stylized, that becomes a spirali-form pattern at the corner. The two sculptures are not very easy to date with precision, but they reflect the influence of West Saxon art in a way that what may be called the 'Maen Achwynfan' stage of the Chester area sculptures does not, and it is accordingly probable that our two fragments are early (i.e. 950 or before) rather than c. A.D. 1000.

T. D. KENDRICK

11. DRAWINGS BY CHARLES SHANNON, R.A.

A SERIES of ninety-one drawings by the late Charles Shannon has been recently presented by the National Art-Collections Fund. They had been mounted in a large canvas sketch-book by the artist, kept during his lifetime, and sold by his executors at Sotheby's on 9 June 1938. At the same sale was a companion album of drawings by Charles Ricketts, containing many studies for his woodcuts, which was acquired by Mr Gordon Bottomley.

Apart from their intrinsic excellence and beauty, the Shannon drawings have a special interest to the Department of Prints and Drawings as a considerable number are the original studies for his lithographs and woodcuts. They are for the most part executed in red or black chalk. They have been mounted for safe keeping, and a selection recently exhibited in the Prints and Drawings Gallery, in conjunction with red chalk drawings of various masters from Michelangelo to Watteau, helped to establish a high estimate of their artistic value. The new series of drawings, added to the Department's large collection of Shannon's prints, offers an unrivalled representation of the artist's graphic work (Pls. XIII, XIV).

A. M. HIND



XII. FRAGMENT OF SAXON GRAVE-STONE



XIII. STUDY FOR HERO AND LEANDER, BY
CHARLES SHANNON

12. WOOD-BLOCKS BY WILLIAM BLAKE.

ANOTHER important gift from the National Art-Collections Fund is the series of seventeen original wood-blocks of William Blake's *Pastorals of Virgil* (1821), and another uncut block with an unpublished drawing by Blake on its surface, from the Linnell collection. Mrs Riches, Mrs Ivimey, and Miss Linnell most generously sacrificed their share as beneficiaries under the Linnell Trust in order to facilitate the purchase by the Fund.

The illustrations to Thornton's *Pastorals of Virgil* are the only example of pure wood-engraving in Blake's work, and among the most enchanting productions of his genius. Technically they are of great interest in the revival of the art of wood-engraving as a medium of original expression, a revival that was encouraged largely by the use of white-line for the design. This is a method in which the engraver cuts the positive lines of his drawing, which print as white on a black ground, instead of merely removing the negative portions from the block and thereby leaving the design in black.

The uncut design, of which a reproduction is given on Plate XV, represents the kneeling figure of a man with right hand uplifted and his left pointing to a lettered scroll at his side, while in the background is a crenellated building on fire, with horseman and soldiers approaching on the left, and a group of panic-stricken figures escaping on the right. The subject probably represents an evangelist (St John and a subject from the Apocalypse?) or prophet, but has not been satisfactorily explained.

A. M. HIND

13. A CHINESE LACQUER BOX OF THE EARLY FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

THE magnificent carved red lacquer box inscribed on the bottom in six characters *ta ming yung lo nien tsao* (the reign mark of Emperor Ch'êng Tsu, who reigned under the title of Yung Lo (A.D. 1403-24)) illustrated on Plates XVI, XVII, would be an important acquisition for any collection; and since the British Museum collections are particularly weak in this direction its arrival most happily repairs an important gap.

There are Chinese accounts of carved red lacquer of the Sung period; what remains has still to be identified: but examples have survived, purporting to be the work of two great artists Chang Ch'êng and Yang Mao who lived at the end of the Yüan dynasty (1260-1368), although we know next to nothing about their lives. Chinese texts on the subject of the early Ming lacquerers are few and scattered and seldom translated, but it cannot be seriously disputed that, if we except the reign of Hsüan Tê, which immediately succeeded it, the work of the Yung Lo lacquerers remains unrivalled by later artists. And the *Chin ao t'ui shih pi chi* says that during the reign of Hsüan Tê the Kuo Yüan workshops bought up Yung Lo pieces, erased their marks, and supplied their own.

The traditions of Chang Ch'êng were carried on by his son Chang Tê-kang (張德剛) into the reign of Yung Lo. The *Records of Chia Hsing*, near Hangchow, tell us 'Chang Tê-kang was a native of Hsi T'ang (西唐), whose father's name was Chang (Chang Ch'êng) and came from the same district as Yang Mao, both of them were masters of making painted and carved red lacquer. In the time of Yung Lo Japan and Lu Chu bought these kinds of lacquer and presented them to the Chinese Court. The Emperor Ch'êng Tsu noticing this called upon these two to (go to Court) but both had already died. Tê-kang was able to continue his father's work and went to Peking, was examined by the Emperor and gave satisfaction and was appointed assistant in the Ying Shan (Imperial) factory to repair the fortunes of his family, in that time another person, Pao Liang (包亮), was as skilful as Tê-kang. During the time of Hsüan Tê he was called to be assistant at the same factory.'

A passage from the *Tsun shêng pa chien* by Kao Lien (published 1591) informs us that 'In the time of Yung Lo the factory of the Kuo Yüan (fruit garden 菓園) made red lacquer with thirty-six layers, which was very satisfactory.

In this period they used pewter bodies or wooden bodies, and carved on the bodies very fine brocade pictures. For the bottoms they used black lacquer juice and used a pin to scratch the characters *Ta ming yung lo nien tsao*. The style of inscription is somewhat superior



XIV. TWO NUDES, BY CHARLES SHANNON



XV. UNCUT WOOD-BLOCK BY
WILLIAM BLAKE

to that of the Sung and Yüan. In the period of Hsüan Tê the red colour was brighter and fresher than in the Yung Lo; the lacquer bottoms were also bright black lacquer and cut with a knife with the characters *Ta ming hsüan tê nien tsao*, and they used gold dust to fill them.'

The *Ch'ing pi tsang* (Collection of Artistic Rarities) by Chang Ying-wên, published 1595 by his son Ch'ien-tê, has little to add. An extract from the work runs, 'In the Yung Lo period in the Kuo Yüan workshop and in the Hsüan Tê period, not only did they use vermilion to finish the body very beautifully but the character inscriptions were still better (than the Sung and Yüan). (In the first) they scratched on the bottoms *Ta ming yung lo nien tsao* with a needle and filled in with black lacquer. (In the second) they used a knife to cut the characters *Ta ming hsüan tê nien tsao* and filled in with gold dust to finish. The method of carving was a long way from being as good as the Sung. The thin bodies of their lacquer were powdered with gold and inlaid with shell, pieces of gold and silver. This kind of lacquer only the Japanese make really well. Imitations are heavy and easy to distinguish.'

Lastly, the *Chin ao t'ui shih pi chi* tells us, 'the Kuo Yüan workshops were situated to the west of the Lin Hsing Gate. In the time of Yung Lo period of the Ming dynasty they made lacquer objects with gold and silver, and lead and wood bodies. They had carved red lacquer and those filled in with lacquer juice—two kinds. The carved red lacquer boxes were of sugar-cane form, steamed cake form, western river form, three meeting and two meeting forms, and so on. The sugar-cane form (painted) with figures was the best. And the steamed cake form (painted) with flowers and grasses was next to it. The basins were round, square, with eight corners, the circular belt style, with four corners, peony petal form, all these shapes. The boxes were long, and square; two meeting form, and three meeting form; these four shapes.

The method of making them was to use thirty-six coats of lacquer, carved with fine brocade decoration. The bottoms had black lacquer on which they used to scratch *Ta ming yung lo nien tsao* with a pin; when compared with those done by Chang Ch'êng and Yang Mao

of the Yüan dynasty their sword hilts and perfume flower (boxes) were even better. Those filled in with lacquer were carved with flowers and birds filled in with painted and piled lacquer juice, polished smooth like a painting. You can keep them a long time and still they are like new. Of the boxes made the smaller are the more precious; the deep ones have five coloured *ling chih* (fungus) on the edges; the shallow ones *lei wên* (thunder pattern) edges. This kind of lacquer is several times as expensive as red lacquer. These two kinds were made at the Kuo Yüan workshop.'

From these passages we learn that the best carved red lacquer in the reign of Yung Lo was made at the Kuo Yüan imperial factory, probably under the supervision of Chang Tê-kang; that it was made with thirty-six coats of lacquer on pewter, lead, gold, silver, and wooden bodies; that the year-mark was inscribed, or rather scratched, on the base with a pin, while the year-mark of the next reign was cut with a knife; that, if carving was not as good as the Sung, the inscription was better.

The carving on the box illustrated in this article is superb. The top of the lid is decorated with a foliate panel containing a house and figures set in a landscape and surrounded with a border of peonies and gardenias in deep relief. On the side of the lid and the box itself are displayed two other flower borders of the same nature. The inscription on the base has certainly been scratched. Unfortunately the box has been slightly damaged and repaired. It is most certainly of imperial quality and may well have been made in the famous Kuo Yüan workshop under the supervision of Chang Tê-kang for the Emperor Ch'êng Tsu himself.

It is astonishing to realize that, if we can trust the Chinese texts, it remained for the Japanese to bring this carved red lacquer to the notice of Yung Lo's court; and that at the end of the sixteenth century the Chinese openly admitted that certain lacquer was made better in Japan.

Diameter (approximate), 18 inches; Height (approximate), 6 inches.

R. S. JENYNS



XVI. CHINESE LACQUER BOX



XVII. DETAIL OF CHINESE LACQUER BOX WITH
INSCRIPTION

14. ANTIQUITIES FROM THE INDUS VALLEY.

THE Department of Oriental Antiquities has received by exchange from the Director-General of Archaeology in India a series of 413 objects from the excavations at Mohenjo-daro. The Department has been able to show for some years a good selection of the decorated pottery from the Nal mound in Western Baluchistan and has lately received small series of objects from two of the best-known sites in Northern Baluchistan, namely Periano-Ghundai in Zhob and Dabar-kot in Loralai, by the gift of Lt-Col. L. B. Freeland and of Major Woods Ballard. These sites show unmistakable connexions with the Indus Valley civilization, but hitherto there has been nothing to represent the main civilization except three seals recovered years ago from Harappa, and it is a matter for great satisfaction that there is now an adequate series of pottery fragments and figurines, together with examples of work in semi-faience, bronze, shell, and ivory, as well as marble weights, from the scientific excavations carried out at Mohenjo-daro itself. These have been fully described in the books of Sir John Marshall, for the seasons 1922 to 1927, and Dr Ernest Mackay, for 1927 to 1931.

The British Museum series includes objects from all the seasons, and it is not possible to mention all the types represented. Many of the undecorated pottery vessels, including storage jars of over two feet high, are sufficiently well preserved to show the shapes clearly. Unfortunately only a dozen or so pots of the decorated types have been found in this condition and it is natural therefore that the series sent to the Museum should only include sherds of the decorated wares. But the principal motives used are represented. The human and animal figurines, though mostly broken, serve to body out the illustrations in the monographs, and provide the most vivid light on the life of the inhabitants of Mohenjo-daro. The collection also includes pottery wheels for model carts, pieces of shell bangles and inlay, and ivory fragments. The worked flints are beautifully finished. Owing to their frequent occurrence in the same strata as bronze implements Sir John Marshall has designated this civilization chalcolithic; but the presence of these flints is not generally considered to justify putting back the culture to this level. Stone was

scarce at Mohenjo-daro, but some curry stones are included, together with a large stone *yonî*. Specimens of the standard bricks used at Mohenjo-daro will be of interest to Near Eastern archaeologists, who will no doubt welcome the opportunity of handling the first consignment from the Indus Valley to reach Europe.

BASIL GRAY

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